

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 EA-06 NEA-09 ISO-00 SAJ-01 IO-10 AID-05 NIC-01

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PA-01 RSC-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 /089 W

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R 311005Z DEC 74

FM AMEMBASSY VALLETTA

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 5938

INFO AMEMBASSY SEOUL

AMEMBASSY TAIPEI

AMEMBASSY TEHRAN

USLO PEKING

AMEMBASSY BEIRUT

C O N F I D E N T I A L VALLETTA 1938

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PFOR, MT, IZ, KN, CH, IR

SUBJ: MINTOFF TO VISIT BAGHDAD, PYONGYANG, PEKING

BEIRUT PLEASE PASS TO US INTERESTS SECTION BAGHDAD

1. ATTORNEY GENERAL EDGAR MIZZI INFORMED ME DEC 30 THAT PRIME MINISTER MINTOFF WOULD BE LEAVING JAN 4 ON TRIP THAT WILL TAKE HIM FIRST TO BAGHDAD, THEN ON TO PYONGYANG AND PEKING. IN ADDITION TO MIZZI' WHOSE TITLE WAS CHANGED FROM CROWN ADVOCATE GENERAL TO AG WHEN MALTA BECAME A REPUBLIC WITHIN THE COMMONWEALTH ON DEC 13), MINTOFF WILL BE ACCOMPANIED BY PRIVATE SECRETARY JOE CAMILLERI, FOREIGN SECRETARY MAURICE ABELA, MIN AGRICULTURE FREDDIE MICALLEF AND CHAIRMAN OF AIR MALTA ALBERT MIZZI. MINTOFF PARTF EXPECTS TO RETURN TO MALTA AROUND JAN 16. (ACCORDING TO ISRAELI AMBASSADOR, GROUP MAY ALSO TRANSIT TEHRAN AS WELL.)

2. MINTOFF IS PRESUMABLY VISITING IRAQ AS ONE OF FEW REMAINING ARAB STATES HE HAS NOT YET VISITED. HE PRIDES HIMSELF ON HIS KNOWLEDGE AND "UNDERSTANDING" OF ARAB
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WORLD. AS DEPARTMENT WELL AWARE, HE ALSO FANCIES MALTA,

AND HIMSELF, AS A "BRIDGE" BETWEEN EUROPE AND THE MIDDLE EAST
AND SEEKS ACTIVELY TO PLAY THE ROLE OF WORLD STATESMAN.

COMMENT: WE DO NOT YET KNOW IF JUST-COMPLETED VISIT OF
COLONEL QADHAFI TO MALTA RESULTED IN RENEWAL OF AGREEMENT
FOR LIBYA TO SUPPLY MALTA'S MODEST OIL NEEDS. IF NOT,
THIS SUBJECT COULD ALSO BE DISCUSSED IN BAGHDAD. MINTOFF
VIGOROUSLY SUPPORTS ARAB POSITION VIS-A-VIS ISRAEL, DESPITE
PRESENCE OF SMALL ISRAELI MISSION HERE. END COMMENT.

3. TRIP TO CHINA UNDOUBTEDLY WILL INVOLVE ANOTHER MALTESE
REQUEST FOR MORE ASSISTANCE OF SOME KIND. MIZZI TOLD ME
THEY HOPED FOR MORE HELP FROM PEKING IN MALTA'S INDUSTRIALI-
ZATION DRIVE. MY ISRAELI COLLEAGUE HAS HEARD FROM OPPOSITION
SOURCES, HOWEVER, THAT MINTOFF'S REAL PURPOSE WILL BE TO
RENEGOTIATE THAT PORTION OF 1972 LOAN AGREEMENT WITH
CHINA THAT REQUIRES REPAYMENT BASED ON BRITISH POUND
STERLING PARITY WITH GOLD. GIVEN ESCALATING PRICE
OF FREE MARKET GOLD AND WEAKNESS OF BRITISH POUND,
REPAYMENT BURDEN ON MALTA COULD BECOME INTOLERABLE
IF THIS PROVISION NOT AMENDED.

4. MIZZI OFFERED NO EXPLANATION FOR VISIT TO NORTH
KOREA, BUT NORTH KOREAN AMBASSADOR PRESENTED HIS
CREDENTIALS ONLY LAST WEEK, AND IT MOST UNLIKELY THAT
OFFICIALS IN PYONGYANG WILL BE ABLE TO AVOID MINTOFF'S
OUTSTRETCHED PALM.SMITH

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